

May Day



1938

FOR

DEMOCRACY

JOBS

SECURITY

PEACE

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BY
Alan
Max

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MAY DAY—1938

MAY DAY this year will be an answer to the economic royalists who want to ride on the backs of the American people, and to their fascist allies abroad who seek to set the world aflame.

All that we, the American people—and our fathers before us—have fought for and won over the course of years is now threatened by a small handful of hard-faced reactionaries of fabulous wealth. All that we want most is endangered because these economic royalists are using their vast power to thwart the will of 120,000,000 people.

The desires of the common people of America are simple ones. All of us—workers, farmers, white-collar and professional people, small business men and others of the middle class—we all want the same things.

We want democracy. We want jobs. We want security. We want peace.

This is not asking much. Yet this May Day of 1938 finds American democracy facing the greatest threat it has ever known as the monopolists work day and night to Hitlerize the country. This May Day finds 15,000,000 of us without jobs, while relief standards are being cut. This May Day finds our hope for security for our families endangered by the new economic crisis. And this May Day finds the torics of this country giving aid and comfort to the fascist war-makers abroad, Hitler, Mussolini and the Mikado, as they seek to engulf the entire world—and America with it—in the bloody whirlpool of a new war.

America Started It

Fifty-two years ago, America made a great contribution to the international working class movement and to the struggle of all common people for a better and happier life. May Day was born fifty-two years ago in this country, created by the American workers as a weapon in their fight for the eight-hour day. A May Day of demonstrations. A day to rally the united will of the people. A day to show our combined strength and to make known our common wants.

The eight-hour day has been won. But today we have new goals and face fresh battles. We gladly accept the heritage of May Day that has been handed down to us through the years. Our May Day parades of this year will be demonstrations for the needs of 1938. We will march for democracy, jobs, security and peace.

With the breath-taking growth of the C.I.O., with a stronger labor movement than ever before, and with better cooperation among all sections of the common people, we are in a position today where we can squarely meet the challenge of the economic royalists and turn back the forces of reaction.

As we march, our brothers and sisters in other lands will be marching too, celebrating the day that was given them by the workers of America. In the Soviet Union, an entire nation—180,000,000 strong (and *strong* is the word)—will march as they hail the successful building of a socialist society, and extend their hand to the people of the rest of the world in a pledge of cooperation in the great struggle for peace and democracy.

In Mexico, the people will be parading. And up north in Canada. And in France, Britain and Czechoslovakia. In Spain and in China, our brothers and sisters will be observing May Day in the trenches. Many of them will be giving their lives on this day as they man the guns to protect democracy against the fascist invaders.

As we march, we will hold out a hand in warm, fraternal greeting to our brothers and sisters who bear untold torments as they carry on the struggle for freedom in Germany, Italy and the other fascist countries.

The common people of the whole world have the same needs and the same dreams. They have the same enemies. That is why all of them, white and Negro, Protestant, Catholic and Jew, will march on May Day. And throughout the world they will say: this day was given us by the workers of America and now it belongs to us all in our struggle for a better world, for world peace.

Who Won the Elections?

An amazing thing has been happening in this country. In November, 1936, the people went to the polls and voted overwhelmingly for a New Deal program of social legislation. In 46 out of the 48 states, they piled up huge majorities against the open-shoppers, against the fascist-minded plutocrats and their little man Landon. The vote spelled: up with progress—thumbs down on reaction!

At every opportunity they have had since then, the people have made their mandate clear. In the municipal elections last fall in New York, the largest city in the country, the people made it evident that, if anything, they were even more determined to win social legislation than they had been the year before. This vote too meant: up with progress—thumbs down on reaction!

A few months later, the people of the deep South let the country know that they too stood for progress. In a special election for the United States Senate, Lister Hill, running as a New Dealer, walked off with the election while the people dumped Tom Heflin, the Ku-Kluxer and anti-New Dealer, into the ash-can. Up with progress—thumbs down on reaction.

And yet—

In the first regular session of Congress following the national elections of November, 1936, month after month passed, and the session finally ended with nothing—absolutely nothing—done for the people.

Then President Roosevelt called a special session—so that Congress could enact the important social legislation that the regular session had ignored. And again Congress did—nothing.

Now we are in the final session before the next elections. When we march on May Day, we will be saying to the group of reactionaries who have been blocking the wheels in Congress: you cannot adjourn this time without listening to the people.

What has happened to the court reform program which the people wanted? Killed and buried by the economic royalists.

What happened to the wages-hours bill? The measure would mean shorter hours and higher wages for the worker. More money in the pockets of the worker would mean more business for the merchant and a better market for the farmer. The bill was one of the campaign pledges of the Democratic Party in '36. Yet what happened? Shelved by monopoly capital through an unholy alliance of Republican stand-patters and Democratic conservatives who went back on their campaign pledge.

What happened to the anti-lynching bill, supported, according to the Gallup Poll of Public Opinion, by a majority of the people in every section of the country, including 57 per cent in the South? The bill would not only save Negroes from the rope and the faggot. But a blow against the lynch-system of the South would also be a blow in aid of the democratic and progressive forces in the South and therefore for progress throughout the nation. What happened to the bill? Filibustered off the floor of the Senate by the same clique who fought court reform and the wages-hours bill.

What happened to the housing bill? Watered down until it

was barely a shadow of the original measure. What happened to adequate aid for the farmers? Adequate relief measures for the unemployed? And what happened to the peace program laid down by President Roosevelt in his Chicago speech in which he urged an economic "quarantine" of the war-making nations as the only way to save world peace? Blocked by the reactionaries.

Who won the elections of '36—the people of America or the monopolist oligarchy?

Verdict: Guilty

The monopolists stand convicted today of dragging this country into the throes of another crisis.

They have sabotaged the legislative program which would have meant greater purchasing power all around and therefore more buying and more production.

They have artificially held up monopoly prices—such as on bread and milk and the materials for building construction like steel, cement and lumber. They have forced down the prices paid to the farmer for his goods, while charging him exorbitant prices for farm machinery. They have driven wages down in those industries where the unions have not been strong enough to resist. They have deliberately withheld investments and closed down factories in order to weaken the unions through mass layoffs and create a panic throughout the country. They have frozen bank credits, thereby strangling the activities of merchants and small business men.

Why have the monopolists aggravated the new crisis? Because they think that an economic crisis will discredit the New Deal Administration and make it possible to replace it with one more to their taste. They figure that a crisis will enable them to get Congress to lift the mild taxes now applied to their corporations. They hope that mass unemployment will undermine the unions.

—especially the huge C.I.O. organizations in the mass production industries—and will enable them to drive down wages.

This May Day will find 15,000,000 unemployed. For this we can thank the monopolists—and their deliberate “sit-down strike.” Our May Day parades this year will rally the people to prevent the crisis from becoming still more aggravated and to keep the monopolists from loading the burden of the crisis upon the backs of the masses as in the crisis of 1929-33. May Day will unite the people to resist wage-cuts, to fight for lower prices, and to force Congress to take emergency crisis measures against the industrial sabotage and price-fixing of the monopolists.

The Right to Work

Fifteen million unemployed! As many as, if not more than, in the darkest days of the last crisis.

During the steel strike of last spring, Tom Girdler and his pals were howling about the “right to work.” Today there isn’t a peep from them—at least on that subject.

For with the economic royalists, the “right to work” was a slogan for breaking strikes. It meant the “right” of the strike-breaker to “work,” while the majority of the workers in the plant were trying to compel the employer to obey the Wagner Labor Relations Act—the law of the land.

Today there are less workers in the steel mills than during the steel strike. The tipple of many a coal mine is deserted. The auto factories are working at a fraction of capacity. But now the slogan of the “right to work” has come to life again—this time with a meaning which makes the Girdlers feel sick all over.

Said John L. Lewis a few months ago:

“We hear much in some of the metropolitan newspapers and from the lecturers on the public platform representing special interests in the country, of the ‘right to work.’ All right, give our people the right to work. Let them work when they want to work, not

merely when Walter Chrysler or Henry Ford want to use their services.”

Not only are there 15,000,000 unemployed in the United States today, but relief standards everywhere are being slashed as the economic royalists crack the whip of “economy.”

This May Day, however, will see the American people better able than ever before to wage the fight for security, jobs and adequate relief. For today, unlike the last crisis, we have the C.I.O., which is going to bat against the misery and suffering of unemployment. Many A. F. of L. unions are in the thick of the fight, too. Labor’s Non-Partisan League has placed the battle for security and jobs high on its legislative program. Meanwhile, we have a powerful, respected Workers Alliance, working closely with the unions, as it carries on the struggle of the unemployed.

In our May Day parades this year, we will raise the cry: “A job or adequate relief for every worker. Improve the Social Security Law for the unemployed, the aged, and mothers, in order to maintain an American standard of living. Improve the National Youth Act to provide education and jobs for all young people.”

May Day will be a day for security and jobs.

Partners of Hitler

The economic royalists of America are engaged not only in economic warfare against the common people. Behind the scenes, they are actively participating in open, military warfare in various parts of the world. They are providing the arms and munitions to the enemies of the American people, the enemies of world democracy.

Trucks and cars, made by Henry Ford and supplied on credit by Ford to the Japanese militarists, are today being used to murder the people of China.

Bombs, bearing the mark of Wilmington, Delaware—home of the du Pont munitions works—are falling upon Chinese cities. It is these bombs that killed the American boys on the U.S.S. *Panay*.

Steel, shipped from the mills of United States Steel, is being forged into Japanese battleships which threaten the peace of the entire Pacific.

Hitler and Mussolini, the invaders of democratic Spain, are supplied with American-made bombs which pour a frightful rain of death and terror upon the Spanish people and upon our own American boys of the Lincoln Battalion, fighting *our* fight for democracy.

Meanwhile, the invasion of little Austria gets the backing of our economic royalists. William Randolph Hearst, for example, applauds the rape of Austria as having a "proper purpose," while he gives Hitler some friendly advice to be a little more "tolerant" so that the antagonism in this country to the Nazi policies "would be abated."

When our economic royalists supply the fascist war-makers with arms, it is not for profit alone. For while they ship supplies to Hitler and Mussolini to be forwarded to General Franco, they give full support to keeping up the disgraceful embargo which prevents the United States from assisting its sister republic—Loyalist Spain. They are willing to sacrifice the profit that would come from helping arm the forces of democracy against the bloody forces of world fascism.

The economic royalists give the fascists more than direct material aid. They are the organizers of the campaign against the one policy that would stop the fascists in their tracks and preserve world peace: the policy of collective peace action—joint economic measures—by the United States along with other democracies including the Soviet Union against the war-makers. This is the policy laid down by President Roosevelt in

his speech at Chicago when he urged a "quarantine" by the democracies against the fascist aggressors.

The economic royalists have mobilized their press, their radio networks, their reactionary stooges in Congress, to block this policy of collective security. They have whipped up a new high-powered Red-scare and an anti-Soviet campaign of lies. They label the policy of collective security a "Communist plot" and try to hide from the people the fact that this policy has the public endorsement of the President of the United States.

Two Great Nations Say It

One week after the invasion of Austria, with the world closer to war than ever before, Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Maxim Litvinov, People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, speaking on the very same day more than 6,000 miles apart, expressed similar ideas about the need for joint action to check the fascists at once.

To knife the peace policy advocated by President Roosevelt. Secretary of State Hull and the Soviet Union, the economic royalists turn the columns of their press over to every foe of collective security. Isolationists, pacifists, advocates of so-called "neutrality," whether crafty foes of peace or misguided friends of peace—they can all make the front page by attacking collective security and by urging America "to tend to her own business"—while the fascists would drag the whole world, including us, into war.

If they unite, the peace forces of the world are invincible. The 180,000,000 people of the land of socialism are pledged to the cause of world peace. The workers and all democratic forces of other lands must also stand ready to prevent the fascists from launching an attack on the Soviet Union and upsetting the peace of the world.

The economic royalists try to conceal from the people the

great service that the Soviet Union performed for all humanity when it uncovered the ring of Trotskyites, agents of international fascism, who were working hand in hand with Hitler and the Japanese generals. The economic royalists try to hide the true meaning of the Moscow trials in order to slander the Soviet Union and to give a free hand to the Trotskyites in this country as they attack Roosevelt's peace policy.

When the Department of Justice uncovered Nazi spies in this country recently, the capitalist press tried to laugh it off as just a "spy scare." For the economic royalists of America are themselves friends and partners of fascism abroad. That is why they are so eager to rescue the agents of fascism when they are discovered—whether in the Soviet Union or in the U.S.A.

When we march on May Day, we will march for an embargo upon Hitler and Mussolini, the fascist invaders of Spain. We will march for the O'Connell amendments to the Neutrality Act so that the United States can sell arms to Spain, a friendly republic in dire distress. We will march in support of the peace policy of the Soviet Union. We will march for world cooperation to establish peace. We will march to save humanity.

Unity Is the Answer

This May Day sees American labor more powerful than ever before in its entire history, with eight millions organized into the unions. Of these, three millions have joined the unions in the last year alone—either through the organizing drives of the C.I.O., or through the example set by the C.I.O. and which brought new workers into the A. F. of L.

When in all American labor history had the steel workers won a signed contract with the most powerful of its trustified enemies—U. S. Steel? The C.I.O. has done just that.

When before did we ever see such a surge of organization spreading like wildfire through the basic industries of the coun-

try, among auto, rubber, marine and transport workers, into the offices where the white-collar workers slave, among the agricultural workers? When before did we see such fraternalism between industrial workers and small farmers? When did we see a labor movement so politically alert—forging its own independent political weapons like Labor's Non-Partisan League? When before did we see powerful international unions battling against the ravages of unemployment during a time of crisis?

We have seen all this with the coming of the C.I.O. and with its sweeping successes under the leadership of John L. Lewis.

The American workers are united in the demands which they make of the open-shop economic royalists. But their ranks are split. And this division is a tremendous obstacle in the path of their common goal.

It is the diehard Executive Council of the A. F. of L. which plunged the knife into labor's ranks. In the past the Executive Council, with its craft union policies, had been unable and unwilling to organize the mass production industries where the bulk of American labor toils. With no membership at all in these industries, they refused to sit by while a new progressive group inside of the A. F. of L. started to do the job. They greeted the formation of the C.I.O. with expulsions. When they were finally brought to the conference table through the initiative of the C.I.O. and through the desires of the A. F. of L. members for unity, the Executive Council broke off negotiations by rejecting the simple unity proposal of the C.I.O.: to take the entire C.I.O. membership—4,000,000 strong—back into the A. F. of L. at once and to iron out all jurisdictional questions afterwards.

The Split Hurts Us All

The split has been of the greatest harm to all workers, whether of the C.I.O., the A. F. of L. or those still unorganized. It has

helped the Wall Street oligarchy block the great goal of labor—100 per cent unionization in every industry and every town a union town. The split has helped the trusts check the fight for further improvement in wages and working conditions. It has resulted in the failure of Congress to pass the wages-hours bill—with the Executive Council actually throwing its weight against the measure when it reached the floor.

Where the split has been carried over into the political field, it has helped the reactionaries defeat the labor and progressive forces at the polls. In New York City, despite the division in labor's ranks, labor stood united at the last election around a single slate of progressive and labor candidates. Result: defeat for the Tammany reactionaries and a splendid triumph for the forces of democracy. On the other hand, in the recent elections in Detroit and Seattle, for example, we saw the full fruits of the split. In each of these cities, the strength of labor was divided between different candidates. Result: defeat for the forces of progress and victory for the open-shop reactionaries.

They are working day and night in every community of the country to defeat the progressives in the coming primaries and in the November elections and send a majority of their stooges into the next Congress. If they can be victorious this year over the divided body of labor, the pro-fascists of the country figure that they will be able to install a regime of their own in the White House in 1940.

United ranks of labor and the cooperation of all democratic forces—workers, farmers, small business men—are an absolute necessity if we would prevent the country from falling into the bloody claws of the open-shoppers and monopolists in the coming elections.

In our united parades on May Day, labor will march side by side. Our united demonstrations will serve to weld the ranks of labor again and speed America on the road to progress.

It Is YOUR Party

May Day, 1938, will see the Communist Party of the United States with 75,000 members—stronger than ever. The Communist Party has always been in the forefront of the struggle for democracy, jobs, security and peace. For years, the Communist Party worked tirelessly for a policy of industrial unionism in the mass production industries. It was the Communist Party that first raised the demand for unemployment insurance. It was the Communists who first fought for equal rights for the Negro people.

Today the Communist Party is a real factor in the life of the country, devoting all its energy to the task of unifying the labor movement, building a sound peace movement and forging a People's Front of all those who have the preservation of democracy at heart. Meanwhile the Communist Party seeks to educate the majority of the people to the need for socialism in this country, when the factories and other means of production and distribution will be in the hands of the people for the benefit of the people, instead of in the hands of a few for the sole benefit of the few as they are today.

On this May Day let us build a more powerful Communist Party as the best guarantee of cementing the democratic front here and now and of ultimately leading America to socialism.

* * *

Men and women of America! The foe is strong, but if all who love democracy are united in its defense, our victory is certain. Let us stand shoulder to shoulder on this May Day and raise a mighty voice: *For democracy! For jobs! For security! For peace!*

You Will Want to Read—

THE HISTORY OF MAY DAY By Alexander Trachtenberg

The story of the origin of May Day in the great American struggle for the eight-hour day. .03



LABOR AGITATOR The Story of Albert R. Parsons By Alan Calmer

The story of the outstanding figure in the great labor struggles which gave birth to the tradition of May Day—one of the men framed-up and hanged in the infamous Haymarket case. 126 pages. .35



WHAT IS COMMUNISM? by Earl Browder

The General Secretary of the Communist Party, U.S.A., tells in this clear and popularly written book the program of the Communist Party, and explains why "Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism." 188 pages. .25



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